

I am very proud of what we have accomplished in this Congress. I think we have established a philosophy and a direction of providing adequate programs for controlling the size and growth of expenditures of the Federal Government; doing those things that are necessary, yet moving many decisions back closer to the people and the local governments; taking care of the obligations we have, such as paying down the debt and returning those dollars.

One of the real controversies, of course, is going to be the tax relief that passed the Senate. The tax relief is in two areas that seem to be particularly appropriate—the marriage penalty tax, where two people who are working for x amount of dollars get married, continue to make the same amount of dollars, and then pay more taxes. It is a fairness issue. There is something wrong with that. We have changed that. The President has threatened to veto it.

The other one that needs to be changed, in my opinion—and the Presiding Officer has been a leader in this—is the death tax, the estate tax, the idea that when someone dies, up to 50 percent of their earnings throughout their life can be taken by the Federal Government.

The alternative, of course, is to not let death be a trigger for taxes but, rather, let those moneys be passed on to whomever they wish to pass them on to, and whenever things are disposed of and sold, there is a capital gains tax, of course, on the growth that has taken place. It seems to me that is a fairness issue.

That is where we are. Those are some of the exciting things that I think are happening, and things that fit in, I believe, with the goals most of us have in terms of moving forward with this Federal Government.

We now have a fairly short time to continue doing what has to be done. Appropriations have to be done. We need to continue with our tax reductions and continue with strengthening education. We need to continue in health care. We are on the road to doing that. I am very pleased with how we are doing it.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

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REMEMBERING SENATOR PAUL COVERDELL

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity to take a few moments to reflect on some things you said and also on what the majority leader said a little while ago.

After our colleague Paul Coverdell died, I made a very brief statement on the floor. I knew I should speak briefly because it would be difficult to talk very long about Paul without becoming too emotional.

I think at a time when politics generally and politicians specifically are the subject of a lot of humor—they are denigrated because of cynicism about the political process, and in fact in some cases the denigration of some politicians is probably warranted—it is important for the American people to be reassured that there are some extraordinarily fine public servants who toil very hard on their behalf and who are responsible for whatever good comes out of these institutions—the House and the Senate.

Paul Coverdell was such a man. All of us who have spoken about him have shared with our colleagues and with the American people the same general notion that it is amazing what you can do if you are willing to let others take the credit for it. That was Paul Coverdell—self-effacing, very hard working, totally trustworthy and honest. Everyone could rely upon him to do the things that had to be done without fear he would in any way attempt to take advantage of any situation. He was as solid as a rock and a very important part of this institution—someone who really helped to make it run, and run in a good way.

I am sure my constituents in Arizona for the most part are unaware of Senator Coverdell, but they and others all around this country need to know how sorely he will be missed—not only personally but professionally—and how important a contribution he made to this country. There are truly some wonderful public servants, and Paul Coverdell was one of the best.

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CONCERNS OF ARIZONA CONSTITUENTS

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, when I was in Arizona this weekend, there were three things that seemed to come up frequently. One, of course, was the Vice Presidential selection of Governor Bush for the Republican nomination this fall. The other two subjects were the issues of tax relief, and I will briefly discuss that, and missile defense, which I will add to the mix, to share some of my constituents' concerns.

On the matter of Vice President, obviously, that is a subject of which Governor Bush will speak today or tomorrow, perhaps. Those on the Republican side will be, I am sure, very supportive. If it is former Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, I think we will be especially pleased. I can't think of anyone who could make a better contribution, not only to the ticket but also to a future Republican administration, than Dick Cheney. He is from the Presiding Officer's State of Wyoming. He represents the kind of values that both the Presiding Officer and others from that great State represent: Straightforward-

ness, plain-spokenness, honesty, directness, a good strong sense of values, a willingness to do the hard work without having to take a lot of the credit, traits we treasure in someone such as Senator Paul Coverdell, and which Dick Cheney would certainly bring to the job. His experience and the great respect which people not only in this country but around the world have for Dick Cheney would serve the ticket well. I am not attempting to influence Governor Bush in any way, but if his choice is Dick Cheney, there couldn't be a better choice.

Now the other two subjects my constituents raised this past weekend. I was astounded that these were the two things they wanted to talk about: The tax relief that the Republican Congress continues to pass, and pass on to the President; and, secondly, the matter of missile defense, which I will get to in a moment.

I was amused to hear the Democratic candidate for President talk about a do-nothing Congress. This is rather strange, considering the fact that we have passed over and over and over legislation to help the American people, particularly to relieve them of some of the tax burden which imposes upon them an extra burden that they need not bear and that is inhibitive of future economic growth.

I am surprised that a Congress which has been so active—and, indeed, President Clinton has criticized us for being so active in this regard—would be accused then of being “do-nothing.” In truth, it is not the Congress that isn't willing to do these things; it is the Clinton-Gore administration that is unwilling to do these things.

Let me give some cases in point. We passed the estate tax relief about which the Presiding Officer talked. It passed overwhelmingly in both bodies, with bipartisan support. But the Clinton-Gore administration says it will veto this tax relief. We passed the marriage penalty, something that President Clinton said, in his State of the Union speech, was a top priority for him. He says he will veto that legislation. We can pass all of these things, but we can't get them into law unless the President signs them. We are doing our best in the Congress. It is now up to the President.

He did sign one thing that we passed this year. The Social Security earnings limitation was finally repealed. That was an important part of tax relief for an important part of my constituency, our senior citizens. There is more work to do there.

We want to also repeal the 1993 tax increase on Social Security which was imposed by the Clinton administration and the Democratic Congress when it controlled the House and the Senate, and Vice President GORE is always proud to remind everyone that he had to cast the deciding vote. This was the 1993 tax increase which, among other things, imposes a tax rate of up to 85 percent on the Social Security earnings of our senior citizens. This is